



September 15, 2003

Dear Colleague:

The National Immunization Program (NIP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is pleased to provide you with up-to-date patient-education materials for use during the upcoming influenza immunization season. These materials take into account new developments with respect to influenza vaccination (e.g., it is now recommended that people 50 years old and older receive an annual flu vaccine)—and highlight the ability of influenza vaccine to reduce influenza transmission. We encourage you to reproduce these materials and make them available to parents, patients, and others who have questions about the flu and the current vaccination recommendations and guidelines.

The materials promote four primary messages:

1. *Getting a flu vaccine is your best protection against influenza.*
Influenza is a serious disease that is easily transmitted to and by people who are not immunized.
2. *Those 65 and older, those of any age with chronic conditions, and children between 6 and 23 months old are at increased risk for influenza-related complications and should make an influenza vaccination a priority.*
Influenza-related deaths average 36,000 a year and hospitalizations average 114,000 per year. The vast majority of influenza-related deaths occur in those age 65 and over.
3. *Protect yourself. Protect your loved ones:* By getting your flu vaccine you are also protecting those people closest to you.
4. *Timely immunization:*
 - October and November are the best time to get immunized
 - Immunizations should be provided in December and later for those people who do not get immunized in the optimal months of October and November.

You can easily reproduce these and other flu-related materials by using your office laser or ink jet printer and your office copier. You can also send these materials to be reproduced by a commercial (offset) printer. We have provided instructions to assist you.

I hope you find the enclosed materials helpful. Please let us know if we can provide additional assistance.

Sincerely,

Glen Nowak, Ph.D.
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